

Now You Can Help With...

# Influenza Sentinel Provider Surveillance

...In Only a Few Minutes a Week!

## What is an influenza sentinel provider?

Influenza sentinel providers conduct surveillance year-round for influenza-like illness (ILI) in collaboration with the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Data reported by sentinel providers, in combination with other influenza surveillance data, provide a national picture of influenza virus and ILI activity in the U.S. Over 2000 providers throughout the country were enrolled in this network at the beginning of the 2004-2005 influenza season.

## Who can be an influenza sentinel provider?

Generally, any provider in any type of practice is eligible to be a sentinel provider, as long as they are likely to see patients with ILI. However, providers who primarily care for institutionalized populations (e.g. nursing homes, prisons) are not eligible.

## Why volunteer?

Influenza viruses cause substantial morbidity and mortality (approximately 36,000 deaths per year on average in the US). However, the effect and timing of influenza epidemics can vary drastically from year to year because influenza viruses change rapidly. Data from sentinel providers are used to monitor the impact of influenza and, in combination with other influenza surveillance data, help guide prevention and control activities, vaccine strain selection, and patient care. Strong influenza surveillance may also provide advance warning of influenza pandemics. In summary, the data provided are critical for protecting the public's health.

## What data are collected? What are the benefits of participating?

### Data collection

- Report weekly number of ILI visits by age group (0-4, 5-24, 25-64, and >65 years) and number of visits for any reason by internet, phone, or fax (ILI=fever > 100 F with cough, sore throat, or both)
- Collect about 10 nasal swabs per year for respiratory virus culture by MDCH
- Data collection activities usually take less than 30 minutes per week

### Benefits

- Weekly influenza surveillance updates by fax from MDCH
- Free hard-copy subscriptions to Emerging Infectious Diseases and the MMWR
- Electronic copy of Epi Insight, the MDCH Bureau of Epidemiology newsletter
- Receive respiratory virus culture results from MDCH regarding influenza, parainfluenza, adenovirus, and RSV

**For more information on Influenza Sentinel Provider Surveillance, please contact Rachel Potter, Vaccine-Preventable Disease Epidemiologist, at [potterr1@michigan.gov](mailto:potterr1@michigan.gov) or 517-335-9710.**

